IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of locating an item in a network of vending machines, comprising:

receiving, at a vending machine in the network of vending machines, a purchase order for the item, the vending machine being configured to dispense at least one type of item when stocked with the at least one item;

in response to receiving the purchase order, transmitting a request for the item via a network connection established through a network interface of the vending machine; and

receiving, at the vending machine, a response to the request indicative of whether the item is available at in at least one other vending machine configured to dispense the item when stocked with the item, whereby a user can retrieve the item at the at least one other vending machine when the item is available at the at least one other vending machine.

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising outputting to the user, from an output device of the vending machine, an indication of the availability of the item at the at least one other vending machine.

3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the transmitting comprises transmitting the request to the at least one other vending machine.

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising prior to transmitting, determining, by the vending machine, the availability of item at the vending machine, and if the item is not available at the vending machine, then transmitting the request.

5.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving the response comprises receiving the response from the at least one other vending machine.

6.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the response comprises receiving the response from a control system configured to process item requests for a plurality of vending machines of the network of vending machines.

7.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, further comprising outputting to an output device a message indicating whether the item was located at the at least one other vending machine and, if so, indicating a location of the at least one other vending machine.

8-9.   (Canceled)

10.   (Original)   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
        receiving, at the vending machine, a payment amount for the item; and
        receiving an electronic refund request for the purchase order.

11-12. (Canceled)

13.   (Original)   The method of claim 10, further comprising refunding the payment amount if customer information received through the network connection satisfies refund conditions.

14.   (Original)   The method of claim 13, wherein the refund conditions comprise a threshold number of purchases made by a requestor of the refund.

15.   (Previously Presented)   The method of claim 1, further comprising:
        if the item is available at the at least one other vending machine, determining whether a price adjustment is necessary for the item;

if a price adjustment is determined to be necessary, adjusting a price for the item; and

displaying the adjusted price to the user.

16.   (Canceled)

17.   (Currently Amended)   A method of locating an item in a network of vending machines, comprising:

receiving, at a vending machine in the network of vending machines, a purchase order for the item, the vending machine being configured to dispense at least one type of item when stocked with the at least one item;

in response to receiving the purchase order, transmitting a request for the item to a control system configured to process item requests for a plurality of vending machines of the network of vending machines, the request being transmitted via a network connection established through a network interface of the vending machine; and

receiving, at the vending machine, a response to the request indicative of whether the item is available at in at least one other vending machine configured to dispense the item when stocked with the item, whereby a user can retrieve the item at the at least one other vending machine when the item is available at the at least one other vending machine.

18.   (Original)   The method of claim 17, further comprising, determining, by the control system, whether any of a plurality of vending machines of the network of vending machines has the item.

19-22. (Canceled)

23.   (Currently Amended)   A machine-readable program product, comprising:
      a computer readable medium; and

a program contained on the computer readable medium which, when read from the computer readable medium and executed by a processor located in a vending machine in a network of vending machines, performs an operation, comprising:

receiving a purchase order for the item at the vending machine, the vending machine being configured to dispense at least one type of item when stocked with the at least one item;

in response to receiving the purchase order, transmitting a request for the item via a network connection established through a network interface of the vending machine; and

receiving, at the vending machine, a response to the request indicative of whether the item is available at in at least one other vending machine configured to dispense the item when stocked with the item, whereby a user can retrieve the item at the at least one other vending machine when the item is available at the at least one other vending machine.

24.   (Previously Presented)   The program product of claim 23, wherein the operation further comprises outputting to the user, from an output device of the vending machine, an indication of the availability of the item at the at least one other vending machine.

25.   (Canceled)

26.   (Previously Presented)   The program product of claim 23, wherein the operation further comprises, prior to transmitting, determining, by the vending machine, the availability of item at the vending machine, and if the item is not available at the vending machine, then transmitting the request.

27.   (Canceled)

28.   (Previously Presented)   The program product of claim 23, wherein receiving the response comprises receiving the response from a control system configured to

process item requests for a plurality of vending machines of the network of vending machines.

29.   (Previously Presented)   The program product of claim 23, wherein the operation further comprises outputting to an output device a message indicating whether the item was located at the at least one other vending machine and, if so, indicating a location of the at least one other vending machine.

30.   (Canceled)

31.   (Previously Presented)   The program product of claim 23, wherein the operation further comprises:

if the item is available at the at least one other vending machine, determining whether a price adjustment is necessary for the item;

if a price adjustment is determined to be necessary, adjusting a price for the item; and

displaying the adjusted price to the user.

32.   (Canceled)

33.   (Previously Presented)   The program product of claim 23, wherein transmitting comprises transmitting the request to a control system configured to process item requests for a plurality of vending machines of the network of vending machines.

34.   (Previously Presented)   The program product of claim 33, wherein the operation further comprises determining, by the control system, whether any of a plurality of vending machines of the network of vending machines has the item.

35-50. (Canceled)